THE CEA CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

Vol. XIII—No. 5 Published at Amherst, Mass. Editorial Office, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. May, 1951

Duke University Library
JUN 13 1951
Durham, N. C.

The Profession in Crisis

(Editor's Note: The following are two of the talks given in what Robert Fitzhugh has characterized as the "excellent" program of the Penn. CEA, Gettysburg College, April 28. Other talks given at this conference will appear in future issues of THE CRITIC.)

In contemplating the profession in crisis, it is necessary to bear in mind that crisis is perennial with us. There can be scarcely a one among us whose recollection goes back to a time when there was not a crisis. Such a state, indeed, is inevitable in view of the limited and often confused mandate which we and all teachers hold from society. Finally, it is to be suspected that if a state of crisis did not exist, we should be obliged to invent it, in order to create that state of tension under which we do our most creative work.

However, it is true that there can be both too much crisis and the wrong sort of crisis, and that, I assume, is our problem today. There are four general areas where the problem of our present and our future seems particularly acute. 1) The area of the oath, or since oaths are relatively unimportant in themselves, the area of growing pressure toward absolute comformity. This strikes at the very heart of the teaching profession and of the teacher's personality. The instant the study of literature is reduced to the absorption of iron-clad doctrine, it ceases to exist. 2) The area of narrow vocationalism. There is a strong tendency to eliminate as 'frills' all aspects of education which do not contribute directly toward the doing of a job. The so-called liberal arts function of education is in danger of being lost, and since in many institutions teachers of literature are almost the sole purveyors of that kind of education, this is indeed a crisis-point for us. 3) The area of professional insecurity. This speaks for itself. There is less of crisis here than of continuing problem. Like Alice in Wonderland we have to run very hard even to stay where we are. 4) The area of sterility. Perhaps we do not often think about it, but one of the most rewarding aspects of our profession is a proselytizing one; almost unconsciously we seek to find others like ourselves whom we can bring into a way of life which we think is the best there is. The worst result of a state of crisis involving the difficulties mentioned above is that it renders the profession so insecure and unattractive that we lose even those dedicated individuals who would normally come to us. And without egotism we are bound to say that the diminution of our ranks produces ultimately a diminution of society quite out of proportion to the numbers lost.

GEORGE J. BECKER
Swarthmore College

No one can doubt that women are at a disadvantage in securing college positions, in keeping them, and in gaining advancement in them. As one of my colleagues—a man, not a woman—put it, women are really marginal employees in college and university teaching. They are taken on when there is a boom in students and a shortage of qualified teachers; they are dropped, in general, before others when enrollments shrink. We can illustrate that from the experience of the depression years. In one English department that I know of there were in 1930 eight women, all of them instructors. By about 1935 there was only one remaining. That situation was not, as it happens, a simple instance of bias against women. Most, not all, of the women in that department had less seniority than most of the men. And as far as I know no women of outstanding ability were dropped.

On the whole, though, it is easier for an administration to drop women than it is to drop men—quite naturally. They are less likely to have dependents. More important, it is thought that less hardship will be caused for women: if they lose their position someone will take care of them. They can go to live with relatives, it is supposed. So can a man, of course (theoretically, at least). It may be psychologically very destructive for either man or woman to have to do this. But it is unquestionably true that in our present society the humiliation of dependence is far greater for men under these circumstances.—I do not speak of what ought to be, but about what is.

This is one reason why I feel that the solution to the problem of security and opportunity for women in college teaching cannot well be attacked directly but must await the solution of certain other problems. I suppose if we chose we could band together as a pressure group and chant slogans —More and better professorships for women, etc. Or we could exert ourselves to stimulate students to demand equality of women with men on their faculties. We could do this—but I am not at all sure that we should. The position of women in college teaching is, after all, improving steadily—which is more than can be said in these days of many other situations that need improving.

If we can improve general policies throughout the profession on appointments and dismissals, for instance, we shall automatically improve the relative position of women. As few appointments are being made now, that question can wait. But I should like to raise the question of dismissal policies in colleges. At the present time many staffs are being reduced materially. It is reported that some institutions are reducing their faculties by as much as 25 percent. Granted that faculties should, where possible, resist that method of balancing a university budget. Administrative officials should learn that treating faculties as what one of my colleagues called "seasonal help," to be assembled hastily in fat years and dispersed in lean ones, is no way to build a good faculty.

Nevertheless, being realistic, we know that reduction of a staff is sometimes necessary and is certainly now taking place. When this occurs, the department chairman or personnel committee, or some other appropriate group

Continued on page 8

Texas Conference Resolutions

The Conference of College Teachers of English, organized April 28-29, 1933, held its annual meeting on March 30-31 in College Station, Texas, with the A&M System of Colleges as hosts. Dr. J. Q. Hays (A&M) was general local chairman. Dr. Troy C. Crenshaw (TCU) was program chairman. In the absence of Dr. E. E. Leisy (SMU), Conference president who is now lecturing in Vienna and Frankfurt, the business sessions were presided over by Dr. Truman W. Camp (Texas Tech.).

The "Founding Father" of the Conference, Dr. R. H. Griffith (University of Texas) attended all the meetings, was on the program, and was singled out several times for honors. Among the distinguished guests were Miss Mattie Sharp Brewer (Thomas Jefferson High School, San Antonio), Chairman of the Committee for the Integration of the Teaching of English in High School and College; Dr. Lee Wilborn, Director of Curriculum in the Texas Education Agency; Dr. H. T. Manuel, member of the Texas Commission on Education; and Dr. T. V. Smith, guest speaker at the Conference luncheon, author, politician, and teacher.

The climax of the morning was a panel discussion with participants Professors R. H. Griffith of the University of Texas, J. Q. Hays of A&M, Ina Beth McGavock of Trinity University, Cothburn O'Neal of Arlington State College, and Johnnie Shirley of Tarleton State College, and moderator, Autrey Nell Wiley of the Texas State College for Women. The subject was: "The Proposed Law for the Certification of Teachers of English."

Council appointments announced were Vice-president, J. Q. Hays, and Secretary-Treasurer, Margaret Lee Wiley. The Conference elected as President, Professor Autrey Nell Wiley. New council lors elected were Professors L. N. Wright of Southwest Texas State Teachers College, Jane Etheridge of Kilgore College, and George Bond of Southern Methodist University.

The following resolutions were passed:

1. Resolved, that a teacher's certificate be granted to the applicant who receives a bachelor's degree with the following general program:

(1) Core of general education: 42 (48 in the TEA *Guide to Study*, p. 18)—60* hours. (Many departments generally will see the wisdom of recommending a minimum of 60.)

(2) Professional education: 18 (Provisional) — 24 (Standard) hours, including practice teaching.

(3) A major in a subject-matter field: at least 30-36 hours.

(4) A minor in another subject-matter field: 18 hours.

(5) Sufficient electives to add up to the number of hours requisite for the standard bachelor's degree.

2. Resolved, that any teacher working for a master's degree or for additional endorsements should take in subject-matter fields at least two-thirds of the amount of work required for the degree.

3. Resolved, that any group or board which will control the setting up of certificate regulations, approval regulations, or accrediting regulations should have a broad base, including in its membership individuals who represent the humanities and the sciences, as well as the education departments.

4. Resolved, that for effective instruction in English in our schools, Set II of the proposals, calling for detailed requirements in specific subjects (proposal II. K. English) as outlined in the TEA bulletin TOWARD PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE FOR TEACHERS, pp. 28 and following, be endorsed as unquestionably preferable to Set I, Flexible Requirements, Broad Fields, as set forth on pp. 26, 27.

5. Resolved, that the standard and professional requirements apply also to teachers of English in departmentalized junior high schools.

6. Resolved, that twelve semester hours of college courses in foreign languages be required.

7. Resolved, that the President of the CCTE be empowered to request representation for our organization at all future conferences on the certification of teachers.

8. Resolved, that the President of the CCTE be empowered to inform such kindred organizations as the Texas Academy of Science, the English Workshop Conferences, the College Classroom Teachers Association, the Texas Mathematical Society, and the Texas Historical Society of these resolutions and request their co operation in effecting the purpose of these resolutions.

The luncheon address, "Poetry, Politics, and Philosophy," was by Dr. T. V. Smith, Syracuse University. (See p. 7, cols. 3-4)

The annual meeting in 1952 will be held in Dallas, with Southern Methodist University as host.

MARGARET LEE WILEY
Secretary-Treasurer,
CCTE

THE CEA CRITIC

Published at 534 Main Street, Amherst, Mass.

Editor
MAXWELL H. GOLDBERG

Editors Emeritus
BURGES JOHNSON
ROBERT T. FITZHUGH

Published Monthly, September through May

COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

President
ROBERT T. FITZHUGH
Brooklyn College

Vice-Presidents
JOSEPH WARREN BEACH
Urbana, Illinois
RUSSELL NOYES
Indiana University

Treasurer
LEONE A. BARRON
Mount Holyoke College

Executive Secretary
MAXWELL H. GOLDBERG
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass.

Director, Bureau of Appointments
ALBERT MADEIRA
Smith College

Directors
Edward Davison, New York City, New York
Percy Houston, Occidental College
T. M. Pearce, U. of New Mexico
John Holmes, Tufts College
Ernest E. Leisy, Southern Methodist U.
Odell Shepard, Waterford, Connecticut
Andrew J. Walker, Georgia School of Technology
Gordon Keith Chalmers, Kenyon College
Thomas F. Marshall, Western Maryland College
Joseph A. Giddings, South Dakota State College

(All official mail c|o College English Association, 11 Old Chapel, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.)

Annual Subscription, $1.50

Re-entered as second-class matter January 9, 1950, at the post office, at Amherst, Mass., under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Entire issue, copyright 1951 by the College English Association

CONTENTS

The Profession in Crisis pp. 1, 8
George Becker, (Swarthmore), Elisabeth Schneider (Temple)
Texas CCTE Report pp. 1, 7
Margaret Lee Wiley (E. Texas State)
What Is Wrong with Our Profession? p. 2
Ellsworth Barnard
The Fault, Dear Brutus p. 3
Willard Wilson (Univ. of Hawaii)
On Feather-Bedding p. 3
Lay On, McCue p. 4
Donald Lloyd (Wayne)
Language and Science Have Similar Laws p. 4
Harry R. Warfel (Univ. of Florida)
Witty But Unwise p. 4
Eliot D. Allen (Univ. of Mass.)
Regional Activities pp. 5-7
Sister Mary Humiliata, Howard P. Vincent, Kendall B. Taft, Kathrine Koller, Belle Matheson
For Dear Old Video U. p. 8
L. B. Salomon (Brooklyn)

What Is Wrong With Our Profession?

The March issue of THE CRITIC was in my opinion the best in years; several articles made me want to grab my pen and jump into the fray. Miss McGavock's plaint made me long to comfort her by saying (what in my experience is true) that freshmen didn't know any more grammar twenty years ago than they do now; and by observing, in general, that the "good old days" never were. Mr. Leisy's point about preparing students for the teaching of high school English struck a more positive note of response. New York State requires such a course, and I taught it for nine years—at first under protest, later with pleasure and a feeling that something was actually accomplished. Where such a course is not required, or where it is not taught by someone from the English Department, that department should make an effort to see that it *is* required and *is* so taught.

But it was Letter No. 4 on the front page that really got me. I am sure the writer spoke for many persons, and that the picture he paints is not exaggerated. As head of the English Department in a small college (before I voluntarily joined the ranks of unemployed English teachers, where I have involuntarily remained), I received well over a hundred unsolicited letters of application during each of the two years preceding the current one. This year, of course, the situation is even worse. The fact is that although we have been complaining for years that the most able young men and women were being lured into other professions or into industry and business by the promise of greater tangible rewards, we have often failed to find a place for such people when they *have* wished to join our ranks.

To be sure, not all the blame for present conditions belongs to the profession. Some of it belongs to the Russian government (and some to the United States government) for the current world chaos—though whether this need have produced so much internal chaos is a question. And some of it belongs to our "free enterprise" system, upon which war or rumors of war inevitably beget inflation, which in turn confronts the colleges, especially the private colleges, with almost insoluble problems. (It seems to me that our whole system of higher education must eventually be tax-supported to a great degree.) And of course much of the blame belongs to the American public, which values television more than education, and had rather support gamblers than teachers. (A considerable part of this public has been through college; could we have done more than we did to give them an adequate set of values?)

None of these things can be changed (except possibly in the long run) by college teachers of English. Other branches of the teaching profession suffer from them equally. Perhaps when we feel like complaining, we should remember the men in Korea who are fighting and dying in a war that progressively makes less and less sense (and try to forget that nearly everybody else on the home front seems to be making a good thing out of it).

But the writer of the letter makes a charge to which all this is irrelevant: namely, that in our profession the unfittest (from the point of view of reason and idealism) are most likely to survive, while the most intelligent and altruistic are eliminated; that the best teachers generally do not get the best jobs, and that the prospectively best teachers often do not get jobs at all. And this charge, I think, is to a great extent true. But one may ask (without implying an answer) whether it is not equally true in other branches of teaching, and perhaps also in other professions and in business. And one may also ask (implying an affirmative answer) whether college administrators are not as much to blame as the profession itself? Are not deans and presidents, as a rule, afraid of teachers who are independent and idealistic, because such persons become "problems," by demanding that intrenched evils be attacked, urging that new ideas be tried, attracting unfavorable publicity (with its attendant financial threat) by defending unpopular ideas or persons merely because they think it right to do so?

Is there nothing wrong, then, with the profession itself? Yes, there is. First, we encourage people to enter it who are not fitted for it, who possess only mediocre abilities. We do this partly out of good nature, partly because we are flattered that our students wish to emulate us, partly because often our bread and butter comes from teaching graduate students and because we find it easier and pleasanter to teach them than to teach undergraduates. I do not advocate the arbitrary restriction of membership in our profession (following the notorious example of the building trades unions and the less obvious policy of the American Medical Association); but in a profession chronically overcrowded—as, by my experience, our profession *has* been for the last twenty-odd years—it seems merely good sense to refrain from encouraging those who are not specially gifted.

A second defect in the present system is that our current programs of graduate study are, as a rule, both unrealistic and un-idealistic. *Of course* (going back to Letter No. 3) a knowledge of economics and political science is far more valuable to the average teacher of college English than is a knowledge of Old French or Middle High German. It is even a fair question whether it is not more valuable than a knowledge of modern French or modern German (if a choice must be made). How many of us ever actually use the French and German in which we once had to pass examinations? (This is not an argument—assuming that the answer is "Very few"—for not teaching modern languages on the undergraduate level.) Likewise, a little knowledge of fine arts (say) is infinitely more important than a minute knowledge of (say) the pre-Romantic poets. And finally (not that the list is exhausted), a piece of honest individual criticism of some important author would be vastly more valuable than the grubby and piddling research that seems to go into the general run of Ph. D. theses—which a former high MLA official once candidly described to me as "respectable mediocre chores."

The point of all this is, with reference to Letter No. 4, that the cut-and-dried, mechanical, restrictive, and prescriptive Ph. D. program that appears generally to prevail at present, attracts and provides a refuge for intellectual and moral mediocrity, while it repels and discourages genuine ability. In this connection, however, I ought to say that some of my best friends are graduate school teachers of English; and that my own graduate work at Minnesota some twenty years back was at almost all points enjoyable as well as rewarding. But accounts that I have heard from friends and acquaintances compel me to conclude that this was a rare experience.

These two evils (there are doubtless many others) *do* lie within the power of the profession to correct. It is precisely such evils that the CEA was formed, and has tried, to overcome. But it is well for us to be reminded from time to time (though I do not say, or think, that our efforts have been wholly fruitless) that the battle is still only begun.

ELLSWORTH BARNARD
Ashfield, Mass.

"Power to the committee recommending a limit of eighteen students in any composition class! How can any one—even one who really likes to teach freshman composition—do justice to three sections of thirty students each?"

I heard General Hershey today at Seton Hall, and he was encouraging. No freshmen, at least, will be taken next year. He looks for fewer inductions in coming months.—J. G. Eaker

Announcing

A New English Anthology

by

HELEN C. WHITE
RUTH WALLERSTEIN
RICARDO QUINTANA

Ready for Fall Classes

Vol. I

Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose

1600-1660

Vol. II coming early 1952

THE MACMILLAN CO.
60 Fifth Avenue, N.Y. 11

On Feather-Bedding

In remitting the fee for my membership in the Association, I avail myself of your invitation to comment on the affairs on our campus. I don't normally do much muttering about the bad times. I am, therein, very much like the thousands of other college teachers who look on wistfully at the economic astuteness of other trades and the neatly organized watch dogs or lobbyists of the sister professions.

Like most college English departments these days, ours is feeling the war-time trend away from the humanities, let alone the actual decrease of enrollments in general. Five or six instructors and an assistant professor are to be sacrificed here, and possibly more. Most of them are pretty capable, eager young chaps who first headed into this game when you and I fired them with the traditional passion for letters and its concomitant zeal to teach.

Where these men will go isn't too clear; many of them are Ph.D.'s and have spent three or four years beyond college training for this great day. They and their wives have endured privations to follow a calling which they had hoped justified a little extra grit. The fulfillment of this pluck and individuality is the answer they are getting from university administrations: a busy shrug and an implied, "My God, do you expect us to make a job for you?"

From the trend in administrative feather-bedding in so many universities, I have seriously wondered why only the business side of an institution of higher learning succeeds in this ancient science of caring for its own. Never in my years of teaching has a Registrar's Office, Dean of Men's Office, Comptroller's Office, Alumni Office, Admissions Office, Public Relations Office, Vocational Guidance Office, Purchasing Department, Student Life, and a few other of the hydra-headed complex now known as a university administration fired a solitary member of its personnel above a junior stenographer or a janitor. I know the old arguments for the irresistible spread of this "non-teaching faculty." Sometimes they are based on a legitimate emergency—such as the increased routine necessitated by veterans' affairs. But most of those excuses are temporary; and the enveloping process continues long after the modicum of resistance has been absorbed. In our institution, one witnesses this wonderful process at a time when long faces are being pulled everywhere over the radical cuts down the line of "teaching faculty."

Well, that is my point; not a new one, just an old gripe among many of us. But it is also one which appears to me to be an orphan in the busy family activity of professional organizations. We have our polite AAUP's, our scholarly congregations of truth seekers, our college conferences, and associations for exchanging shop talk—even our Phi Beta Kappas—and in none of these can a finger be raised to justify the ways of our profession to the unhappy apprentice or journeyman who faces no job. The CEA maintains a sort of job exchange which serves a very useful function. But this, I think, does not pretend to be more than a clearing house.

Must the desk job up in our stream-lined Old Administration Hall be the answer for a man bred to college work? Certainly up there, the market doesn't rise and fall so capriciously with the index of livestock on the hoof. Up there a mere fluctuation of freshmen candidates doesn't disturb the confraternity of college business men too much. Perhaps feather-bedding is almost as uncouth a word to our well-bred sensibilities as "unions", but it's the way the crude laboring class keeps from starving.

I have taken far more liberty in this letter than your courteous invitation in the circular called for. But since I have a strong hunch that I speak on a problem scarcely limited to my college, perhaps it can be justified.

Gripes and Grieving

You are to be congratulated on the way things are going with THE CRITIC. It's a lively, useful organ of pedagogical—and sometimes other—opinion in our field. One gets here the feel of the pulse of his brethren in our great confraternity in a unique way. At least I am not aware of any other publication that performs just this service of rather unfettered expression.

The labor unions have an institution they call "grieving," whereby at certain times meetings are turned over to those who have gripes and grieves. The CEA CRITIC affords opportunity for just that sort of thing as occasion offers. It's a good healthy outlet as I see it. And I can say this, even in view of my own private conviction that some of the other fellow's gripes are more or less imaginary: for example, I find that most of the fuss raised over the present Ph.D. degree is if not moonshine, at least, founded on not a little misapprehension and misinformation. But that's all right. In the end good is bound to come from such discussion.

S. D. THORPE
Univ. of Michigan

The Fault, Dear Brutus

I am sure many of us were stimulated by letter number 4 on the first page of the March CRITIC. The fact that "Good people are either leaving or, worse yet, never entering the profession, in droves" is unfortunately as true as it has been for the past fifty years. I indicated my personal alarm concerning the loss of youth in the AAUP Bulletin back in 1945. Your March letter is the kind of bitter result of some of our past follies that might be expected. Certainly we are underpaid, unrecognized, shabby of clothes and dented of fender.

For a considerable number of years I was chairman of a department having from 17 to 25 individuals of the rank of Instructor or above. Because of the geographical location of my institution, most of our employing was by mail and much of it without benefit of a personal interview. We depended of necessity in most cases on the written words of the applicant for the initial introduction. In an ordinary year I received from twenty to thirty letters of application. One year, if my memory serves me correctly, I received more than fifty. For various reasons other than the smallness of pay we had a fairish turnover, sometimes running as high as eight new staff members per year, and so we might well be considered a good market.

Yet of all the applications received from these people supposedly trained in the nuances and facilities of the English language we could usually eliminate a heavy percentage on the basis of incompetence in the preparation of a letter of application. So exasperated did I become on one memorable occasion when I had received a blotched, misspelled, non-sequitur, bombastic, wise-cracking, hodge-podge of illiteracy that I answered the sender with a curt note in which I intimated that far from approving his application as a teacher of literature and writing, I considered him a disgrace to the grade school from which, I presume, he had graduated. I shouldn't have done it, of course, because he retaliated with a list of publications and testimonials to his ability as a writer and his excellence as an appreciator of literature! The fact that nobody would have guessed it from his first inept approach he considered beside the point.

I have an honest and grave fear that many of our potentially good teachers have difficulty securing positions because of carelessness or embarrassment in the initial approach.

The point need not be belabored further, but for practical purposes perhaps we could promulgate a few clear suggestions that might be of help. Here is a beginning list of antipathies.

1. The obviously routine enquiry, "Dear Sir: Do you have an opening?" —Nobody will bother to pursue such a cold trail unless he is indeed desperate. The first introduction must be convincing and clear.
2. The mimeographed dossier of accomplishments and background, unless it is accompanied by a warm, literate and thoughtful letter obviously directed at the specific institution to which it is sent.
3. The "cute" letter that is too warm and too personal and is based on social rather than business and professional premises.
4. The letter that is sloppy, incoherent or indeed merely "hasty" in its appearance. Anyone who denies that physical appearance is of importance in the initial document is dishonest with himself and unrealistic about the academic world in which he proposes to live. Either characteristic is dangerous in a teacher.

These points influencing judgment, although they may not be the most important, are certainly common in my experience.

WILLARD WILSON
University of Hawaii
(Prof. Wilson is dean of student personnel)

Ready for fall classes

7 New Titles In Harper's Modern Classics

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
by Fyodor Dostoevsky
Introd. by Avrahm Yarmolinsky

FATHERS AND SONS
by Ivan Turgenev
Introd. by Delmore Schwartz

THE GRAPES OF WRATH
by John Steinbeck
Introd. by Charles Poore

GREEN MANSIONS
by W. H. Hudson
Introd. by Louise Bogan

THE JUNGLE
by Upton Sinclair
Introd. by John Fischer

NIGGER OF "THE NARCISSUS"
by Joseph Conrad
Introd. by Morton D. Zabel

SONS AND LOVERS
by D. H. Lawrence
Introd. by Mark Schorer

95c

HARPER & BROTHERS
49 East 33d Street New York 16

THE CONTINUITY OF POETIC LANGUAGE

Studies in English Poetry from the 1540's to the 1940's

• by JOSEPHINE MILES

Describes and analyzes the language most used in the poetry of five centuries by selecting a decade in each century. Miss Miles asserts the homogeneity of five centuries of poetic practice, and shows how succeeding decades modified their linguistic heritage. An excellent text for the history of poetry.

• 334 pages
• Bibliography
• $5.00

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley 4, California

Lay On, McCue

The observations on Allen's *English Grammar* published by George S. McCue (March, 1951, CRITIC) should have been made long ago. Mr. Allen's reply is negligible, and should not be permitted to obscure McCue's just appraisal of the work, one with which most professional students of the English language will agree. As McCue points out, the *English Grammar* is not an accurate description of Standard English, but a mingling of accuracy and inaccuracy whose overall effect is to be simply untrue. Its "principles" and categories are not derived from an inductive study of the language, nor do they lead to an understanding of it; they are in this presentation infused by the moralism which is found in so much English teaching and has no place there.

It is not presumptive of McCue to condemn the book; nor is he, in condemning it, condemning or rejecting the study and teaching of grammar. It is presumptive of Allen to prepare such a book in total disregard of modern linguistic study, for the subject-matter of the book is linguistics. It is hard to imagine another field in the colleges and universities where a book like this would be seriously considered or generally used; a parallel in geology would be an exposition of geophysics based on the notions that the earth is flat and that the sun and planets circle about it. Allen's *English Grammar* is regrettably inaccurate in detail, prepared without reference to a mass of scholarly research on its subject-matter, dogmatic where dogmatism is inappropriate, and "authoritative" although it has no grounds for claiming authority. Its apparently wide sale and use are embarrassing evidences of the tendency of English teachers to be fooled by loud claims of authority and righteousness, however specious these claims are. McCue was, if anything, too kind to it.

DONALD LLOYD
Wayne University

Everything for the history of language course

Grammatical and historical exposition

Intensive exercises
Selections for study

Introduction to the English Language

by

ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT

The book with the famous inductive approach — from modern to Middle to Old English

347 pages $3.25

Oxford University Press

Language and Science Have Similar Laws

It is now a common notion that the existence of a deviation from a rule of grammar invalidates the rule. The finding of a so-called error in the writings of an otherwise flawless author allegedly has the effect of nullifying the generalization. As a result of this reasoning, few "rules" in a handbook of usage now seem tenable unless hedged with cautionary, delimiting remarks. There is a tendency to assert that all rules are unwise. "In view of these observations on current usage," one teacher has written, "one wonders whether he has the right to follow the dicta of the prescriptive textbooks."

"Linguistic authoritarian" and other derogatory names have been applied to handbookmakers. Their books are said to indicate their compilers' love "for absolute and final authority." The objectors to prescriptive books assert that these works are "undemocratic," but it is interesting to note that democracy turns out to have an "aristocratic" quality, for these persons require that decisions about usage be made on the basis of "fashion and good form": if "Time" magazine uses a locution or a punctuation formula, it is deemed better than a similar usage employed by college freshmen. By the critics' standard if applied consistently, there would be no erors at all, and the whole business of teaching language would be one of teaching expression.

One law of life is variety within a common mold. The human being can be described in general terms, his ordinary code of conduct can be defined within ethical boundaries, and every manifestation called human can be charted to a norm. The same generalization is true about natural phenomena. A radio repairman explained that my house circuit is for 110 volts but that the electric company is delivering 128 volts and that all my appliances work satisfactorily. The geneticist tells his students that chromosomes in gladioli appear in harmonic series, although he adds, often to himself, that deviations are numerous.

The teaching of the natural and social sciences on the elementary level requires the teaching of norms, which are generalized rules or authoritarian standards. Mathematics is wholly prescriptive in this respect. The cataloging of living things into phyla and genera is wholly prescriptive. The assertion of the observable identity of physical phenomena under laboratory conditions likewise follows the prescriptive rule. Yet no scientist would deny the possibility of deviations; indeed, his knowledge of exceptions helps to give authority to his normative methodology.

Since language is the possession of every human being, and since—within the announced area of limitation—an inductive examination of each person's language is necessary to achieve a final answer to any linguistic investigation, a complete chart of usage (especially if it includes pronunciation) would be a bewildering document to present to a student. Anyone who examines the use of "good" and "well" in such a sentence as "He plays good (or well)" and attempts to codify on a regional or national basis the strange mixture of usage and pronunciation is reduced to silence when discussing with students the principle of the correct use of these words. There is simply no discernible rule to be achieved on the basis of "fashion and good form"; there are no observable differences, qualitatively or quantitatively, in the levels of usage as determined by standards for differentiating classes of people.

In 1933 I published an essay to show that "ain't" appears in literature and in speech on all levels of usage, on all social levels, and in all English dialects. Dozens of locutions like "It is me" and "between John and I" similarly occur on all levels. It is apparent, therefore, that an unwise generalization resulting from the game of recording all usage is likely to lead to linguistic nihilism, to the idea that no objective standard of language norms exists. However fascinating (and, I think, fallacious) such a conclusion may be in philosophy, it would lead to chaos in the teaching process.

The practicalities of life require that norms be taught. There is no law about a nine o'clock retiring hour for children, a ten o'clock hour for early teenagers, and an eleven o'clock hour for adults. Yet these norms exist as a result of generations of experience. Language like sleep is a habit as well as a necessity, and each is practiced most happily when performed in relation to accepted norms.

It must be clear, therefore, that a handbook of language usage is not a destroyer of truth, a perverter of the facts, or an authoritarian prescription to remake the common speech into an ideal structure. Depending upon his awareness of the facts, the handbookmaker is trying to present those norms by which the learning, knowing, and using processes are simplified. That he should be working in harmony with the genius of the language goes without saying. But that he is following an approved and necessary method also is obvious.

Norms and the whole truth are not identical, nor is it possible to deal with the whole truth in presenting statements about language usage in the brief compass of a grammar or handbook. Such a book as Ralph B. Allen's "English Grammar" must present "a systematic and formal study," should state that the decisions (or rules) in the book represent "the formal language of educated people" or some other norm, and should be consistent in its application of its stated principle. The extent to which variations from the norm are recorded is wholly a matter of an author's discretion. It is the privilege of users to disagree with the norm chosen by an author, but that a norm is necessary is as true in language study as in any other scientific work.

Science is merely codified knowledge, and codification is achieved by employing an established principle involving norms. Learning (that is, science) begins with the discovery of identity in difference and proceeds to find principles of order in an otherwise chaotic set of phenomena. To the extent that a book—even a handbook—helps present a tenable ordering of phenomena it follows scientific method.

HARRY R. WARFEL
University of Florida

McCue "shouldn't ought to - - - - - -."

Prof. George S. McCue's witty but perhaps unwise review of *English Grammar* by Ralph B. Allen—no relative of mine—which appeared in the March CRITIC has already been answered by the author himself. I feel, however, that there is room for another partial answer on a slightly different basis.

Mr. McCue's primary objection is that while he infers from part of one sentence in the introduction that the *Grammar* is intended to be iconoclastic and, as he says, "to shock schoolmarms," it is actually a reference book of correct and conventional usage. His inference is quite unwarranted. The introduction states in some detail the purpose of the book and specifically describes it as suitable for use "in the senior year of high or preparatory school or in the first year of college." This is not a study for professional linguists, designed to tabulate extremes of usage and regional variants. It is for the student at or below the college level. What the college freshman asks when he turns to his grammar for reference is not, "How wide are the limits to which I may go?" but "What is the best, most accepted usage here?" This information Mr. Allen's grammar supplies.

The sinister part of Mr. McCue's review, beyond its unjustified attack on this book, is its implication that the serious study of formal grammar is so ridiculously old-fashioned as to deserve our laughter and scorn. If we may judge by the post-war freshmen at the colleges where I have taught, his attitude must be currently shared by most high-school teachers of English. Unfortunately, many "rhetorics" prepared for first-year college use either subscribe to this view of the unimportance of grammar or else assume that grammar has already been mastered. As a result, we have a generation of students many of whom cannot spell, punctuate, or write simple sentences correctly, even in English courses; and to what depths of illiteracy they sink in courses where they feel that English doesn't matter, our colleagues in other departments often indignantly show us. Mr. Allen's *English Grammar* is one man's attempt to help check this tendency. Mr. McCue's review seems to encourage it to roll on unchecked.

If I have any objection to lay before Mr. Allen, it concerns not his book but his reply. Surely the current freshman idiom is not, "he shouldn't ought to have did it" but instead "he shouldn't ought to *of* did it."

ELIOT D. ALLEN
University of Massachusetts

CEA REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The winter and spring season of regional CEA meetings has yielded a bountiful harvest. It has been a bumper crop in at least three respects: (1). in total number of meetings—eight; (2). in number of meetings on a single day—three, on April 28 (NECEA at Mount Holyoke; Penn. CEA at Gettysburg; Chicago CEA at Roosevelt); (3). in volume, worth, and effectiveness of presentation. Because of (3). the present CRITIC can merely suggest the range, richness, and variety of the regional discussions. It must leave most of the material for future treatment in its columns.

The newly formed Southeastern CEA led off with a fine first conference at Georgia Tech., on February 19. The California CEA came next, with a meeting at San Bernardino Valley College (March 10). In April, in quick succession came the Middle Atlantic meeting at Western Maryland (April 21), and the three meetings already mentioned, on the 28th. On May 5, the NYCEA met at Syracuse. The season closed with a two-day conference of the Indiana CEA, at Anderson College (May 11-12).

In addition, the national office and THE CEA CRITIC cooperated with the Texas College Conference of Teachers of English—by way of advance publicity on their annual meeting of March 31. That this cooperation has proved helpful may be gathered from comments we have since received. Margaret Lee Wiley, secretary-treasurer of the CCTE, has expressed "appreciation for your interest in our program," and, following a similar note of appreciation, Autrey Nell Wiley, president of the CCTE, has added: "I value the contribution that the CEA makes to our profession."

Because of the nationally interesting discussions at the CCTE, THE CEA CRITIC intends to give considerable space to them. It makes a start in the present number.

HARBRACE MODERN CLASSICS

for Composition and Literature Courses

- Cozzens THE JUST AND THE UNJUST
- Forster A PASSAGE TO INDIA
- Glasgow VEIN OF IRON
- Lewis ARROWSMITH
- Lewis BABBITT
- Lewis MAIN STREET
- Woolf MRS. DALLOWAY
- Woolf TO THE LIGHTHOUSE
- Forster ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL
- Porter FLOWERING JUDAS AND OTHER STORIES
- Untermeyer BOOK OF LIVING VERSE
- Saint-Exupéry WIND, SAND AND STARS
- Steffens THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LINCOLN STEFFENS: Abridged
- Strachey QUEEN VICTORIA

HARCOURT, BRACE and Company

383 Madison Ave. N. Y. 17

California CEA

The spring meeting of the Southern California section of the College English Association was held on Saturday, March 10, 1951, at San Bernardino Valley College. Dr. Lionel Stevenson of the University of Southern California presided. There were in attendance forty-one representatives from the following institutions: California State Polytechnic College, Chaffey Junior College, Claremont College, Immaculate Heart College, La Verne College, Los Angeles State College, Loyola University, Mt. St. Mary's College, Pasadena City College, University of Redlands, San Bernardino Valley College, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Southern California, and Whittier College.

The meeting was opened with greetings from the president, Dr. Stevenson. The minutes were read and approved. An announcement was made that the College English Association would accept the invitation of the University of California at Los Angeles to hold the fall meeting on that campus. The tentative date was set for November 17. Dr. Stevenson also noted that reservations would be made earlier for the fall meeting.

Dr. Stevenson then introduced the morning program by pointing out that English as taught in college generally fulfills one of three purposes: It may be thought of as a general education discipline, as training for specialists, or as a preparation for professions and careers outside the field of English. The fall meeting in 1950 had for its theme, "General Education." The spring meeting was planned to discuss the third interest, "English in Technical and Professional Programs."

Dr. Stevenson then introduced the first speaker, Dr. Thurston B. Swartz of San Bernardino Valley College, who spoke on "English for Commerce." Dr. Swartz brought out that the teaching of English should not be directed toward certain fields exclusively. He stated that the value of English in commerce is actually the training in English composition which it furnishes. The Business English course should be one which provides the essentials of usage for all the needs of the business world. Clarity and conciseness, not literary quality, is the norm for the Business English student. Through the course in Business English should be developed such qualities as a keen imagination, a sense of humor, a code of ethics, a knowledge of practical psychology, and courtesy.

Mr. Orrin Evans of the School of Law, University of Southern California, gave "English for Law" as the second address. Mr. Evans stated that the nature of the lawyer's work would suggest certain emphases in the teaching of English. The lawyer must be able to make careful use of English. He needs work in vocabulary, in critical reading of texts, in study of the exact denotation and connotation of words, and in the careful discrimination of related ideas. He needs the ability to sift, select, and arrange materials. He needs an understanding of people for which literature may provide case studies. The pre-legal student should be directed into fields noteworthy for their difficulty, and urged to take courses from inspiring and difficult teachers.

The law school enjoys certain advantages in its teaching in that it has the backing of a strong professional group for the law school requirements, and also in that its demands lead directly to the means of livelihood for the students. Mr. Evans concluded by remarking that in order to provide the pre-legal training desired, law schools could enter the field of pre-legal training or could set up entrance examinations in the various fields. However, perhaps neither of these plans would be desirable..

"English for the Armed Forces," the title of the third address, by Dr. Mitchell Marcus of the University of California at Los Angeles, placed emphasis on the strong desire for clearer communication made evident by the new army handbooks. Dr. Marcus suggested that an analysis of David Klein's book, *Army Writer*, would be of value to all English teachers. Dr. Marcus suggested that the courses in composition should emphasize that phase of English with the supplementary readings used as models rather than as material for discussion. Writing instruction should stress logical treatment rather than the impressionistic handling of materials. By means of example Dr. Marcus brought out that effectiveness in sentence structure was essential, that diction drills should eliminate jargon but not the necessary technical vocabulary, that reader ease was the responsibility of the writer.

The afternoon session convened at 2 o'clock when an interesting discussion of the modern novel was given by Mr. Joyce Cary, famous English novelist.

SISTER MARY HUMILIATA, I.H.M.
Immaculate Heart College
(Sec'y-Treas., Calif. CEA)

Chicago CEA

"I can report that the meeting of the College English Asociation on April 28 was tremendously successful. We had papers from William Van O'Conner, University of Minnesota, Herbert Lamm, University of Chicago, and W. R. Keast, University of Chicago, analysing from different points of view Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." After each paper there was a discussion and after the last paper the meeting was thrown open to all for extended discussion. Everybody agreed that it was an excellent day.

Officers were appointed for next year: Kendall Taft, Roosevelt College, president; Robert W. Frank, Jr., Illinois Institute of Technology, vice-president; Benjamin Lease, University of Illinois, Navy Pier, secretary-treasurer.

HOWARD P. VINCENT
Illinois Institute of Technology

"I was particularly pleased to see a good many "first-timers" in the group, as well as the representatives from schools outside the immediate Chicago area—Valparaiso, Illinois Wesleyan, and University of Wisconsin Extension at Milwaukee. The officers, I thought, arranged a very stimulating program, and much credit should go to Messrs. Vincent, Douglas, and Workman for making and successfully carrying out the plans for this program. The comments I heard between sessions and after the meeting were uniformly favorable."

KENDALL B. TAFT
Roosevelt College

Middle Atlantic CEA

N. Bryllion Fagin, regional president, has written: "The delegates left feeling that CEA is doing important work." Bob Fitzhugh, who, with Tom Marshall, represented national CEA at the meeting, has singled out the luncheon talk for special praise. (To be published in later issue of the CRITIC.)

One of the favorable regional developments this season has been the readiness of officers of other organizations to call to the attention of the members of their groups the values of the CEA and of THE CEA CRITIC. Both the Texas CCTE and the Colorado-Wyoming Academy of Letters (meeting at the University of Denver on May 5) are examples. Already the results justify the effort.

Although, beyond the Southeastern CEA, no further new regional CEA affiliates have made official and public appearance, much work has gone into the formation of such units, and considerable progress has been made. Here we may look to a fall, rather than a spring, harvest.

Dear Mr. Madeira:

The situation here has become more precarious since the Annual CEA Meeting because of heavy and continuing drops in enrollment. *Official* estimates of the cut in our staff range from 20 to 35 per cent for next fall.

Announcing a new volume to

English Masterpieces

by Maynard Mack, Leonard Dean & William Frost

The new volume, VIII, Selected Prose, contains prose from Malory to the present time. Its editors are Maynard Mack and William Frost.

Other volumes in the set are: Vol. 1, The Age of Chaucer; Vol. 2, Elizabethan Drama; Vol. 3, Renaissance Poetry; Vol. 4, Milton; Vol. 5, The Augustan Age; Vol. 6, Romantic and Victorian Poetry; Vol. 7, Modern Poetry; Vol. 8, Selected Prose. Volume 1-6, $1.25 each; Volume 7, $1.50; Volume 8, $2.25. Complete set $10.00. Each volume is 5x7½", containing 32 pages. Prices quoted are for classroom use.

Send for your copy today!

Prentice-Hall

NECEA

About one hundred and seventy-five members attended the NECEA spring meeting at Mount Holyoke College. For some of the sessions—notably that in which Wallace Stevens presented his address "Two or Three Ideas"—attendance was even larger—according to some estimates, about 300. Prepared especially for the occasion, Wallace Stevens' address is to appear as a CEA Chap Book. (While he was speaking at Mt. Holyoke, William Van O'Connor, Herbert Lamm and W. R. Keast, at the Chicago CEA meeting, were discussing his "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird."

Himself past Program Chairman, Norman Pearson has characterized the meeting as the most successful thus far. Henry B. Williams (Dartmouth), who served as chairman for the panel discussion on "Drama, Theatre Arts, and the Liberal Curriculum," has written: "It was great fun at Mt. Holyoke and my wife and I enjoyed ourselves tremendously. I don't recall ever being so graciously treated in any similar situation and I am most happy that I am now a member of this organization."

Greetings by President Roswell Ham, of Mount Holyoke, and Prof. Leslie G. Burgevin, Chairman of the Department of English, opened the conference. Program chairman Alan McGee presided at the opening session. William G. O'Donnell (Univ. of Mass.) was chairman of the session on teaching James Joyce's *Ulysses;* Curtis Dahl (Wheaton), of the session on the educational value of the general examination; Frederick S. Troy (Univ. of Mass.), of that on the teaching of Pope. Because of illness, C. L. Barber (Amherst) did not participate in the Joyce discussion. Virginia Prettyman (Wellesley)—not Katherine Balderston, as earlier announced—was third participant in the discussion of the general examination. Following an informal reception by the Mount Holyoke Department of English and a dinner at Mead Hall, Sydney MacLean (Mount Holyoke) introduced Peter Viereck, who spoke on "Keeping a Free Society Free."

Politically, Prof. Viereck pointed out, freedom "depends upon various kinds of balance, between liberalism and conservatism, between individualism and state security." The British Labor government, he suggested, may now have swung too far in the direction of security.

"But it is not enough to have political civil liberties," the speaker continued, "if America becomes culturally more standardized, stereotyped and mechanized." He predicted that, if we "go Hollywood," we will lose our cultural freedom.

However, according to Prof. Viereck, there is hope of a spiritual reawakening in the U. S. He suggested that, now that we have conquered our country's geographical and material frontiers, we might turn to "internal frontiers," and increase our national interest in sculpture, music, literature and painting.

It was voted to accept an invitation to hold the fall NECEA meeting at Emerson College. Three other invitations for future NECEA meetings were placed in the hands of the officers and directors for later action.

CEA REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Parts of Peter Viereck's essay "The Education of a Poet" (*Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1951) are drawn from his study of mid-century revolt in poetry in the symposium *The Arts in Renewal*, published last March by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Mr. Viereck tells us that *The Arts in Renewal* is "good for classroom use."

On May 22, at Kingston, the Department of English of the University of Rhode Island was host to the annual meeting of the Rhode Island Association of teachers of English. Nancy Potter served on the committee on arrangements. In his talk, Max Goldberg, the guest speaker, paid tribute to Walter Simmons, Warren Smith, Paul Reynolds, and other members of the host department for their staunch support of regional and national CEA activities.

NYCEA

The meeting of the upper New York State branch of the CEA was held on Saturday, May 5, at Syracuse. In the morning many of us attended the N.Y.C. of T.E. and listened to some of the problems raised by high school and college teachers. The ability exhibited by many to skirt the issue of college preparation and measures of competence for those who hope to attend college was a little depressing. But the issues were raised and raised again by people like Prof. Lucyle Hook.

The meeting of the CEA was attended by somewhere between fifty and seventy-five people. Prof. Sanford Meech presided as moderator, and the program was a panel discussion of the question "The English Concentrator's Program and His Vocational Problems." Prof. William Sale, Jr., of Cornell spoke on the philosophy behind the teaching of English. Prof. Jonathon Kistler of Colgate spoke about the problems of a liberal arts college. Prof. George Kahrl of Elmira spoke about the special problems in a women's college and Prof. Ralph Tieje of the unresolved questions which face the young state college which draws on a special group distinctly vocational-conscious.

The discussion from the floor was brief, and no one answered the question as to why English should be taught. The impression I received was that people felt the subject alone justified its existence and that each man worked matters out in his own way with his own students and in his own interests. This, however, is a distinctly personal reaction. Frankly, I was disappointed in the failure to face the problems which many liberal arts concentrators worry about today.

The questionnaire, very brief and somewhat inadequate, which we sent out, drew some interesting replies, but the best was a pamphlet from Prof. Short at Hofstra which shows, I think, how intelligently one college is facing the question of how a course of study, centered around some of the liberal arts (English in this case), may serve practical ends. We at Rochester were so impressed that we have prepared the same brochure for our advisees, class officers and deans.

From the general tone of the meeting I would have believed that we cannot serve Literature and Mammon, but most college graduates today feel that it is best to eat if they are expected to serve literature or anything else.

We elected officers for next year: Prof. Ralph Tieje of Champlain, president and Prof. Sanford Meech, vice-president. After the close of the meeting, Prof. Meech entertained those who stayed for the evening meeting at his home. The group had dinner at the Men's Faculty Club. After dinner there was a brief discussion of the best time of meeting and the number of meetings possible during the year. The consensus of opinion was in favor of one annual meeting and that a fall meeting was most suitable.

(*Adapted from informal report by retiring regional president, Kathrine Koller.*)

Indiana CEA

On May 11 and 12, the Indiana CEA held its sixteenth annual meeting—at Anderson College. Regional President R. W. Pence (DePauw) has pointed out that this affiliate has been "in existence long before the national organization," and that from the beginning, the name Indiana College English Association was used. An official report of the conference has not yet reached THE CRITIC office. But our files enable us to jot down a few notes—to tide us over.

Russell Noyes (Indiana U.), as CEA vice president, brought greetings from the national organization. He spoke of the growing CEA enthusiasm and CEA expansion in new regions.

". . .I enjoyed myself, as I always do at these meetings, seeing old friends. We had an inspiring talk at the dinner—by Paul Landis, of Illinois. . .Next year we plan to meet at Hanover on the Ohio, one of the loveliest spots in our state. . ." —Russell Noyes.

The Indiana University annual Writers' Conference will be held at Bloomington from July 8 to 14. For further information, write to the Director, Writers' Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

The third annual Writers' Conference to be held by the University of Notre Dame, June 25 to June 30, will have three workshops: Fiction, Poetry, and the Teaching of Creative Writing.

The staff in charge will be: Jessamyn West, novelist; Robert Giroux, Editor, Harcourt, Brace & Co.; Henry Volkening, Literary Agent; and Richard Sullivan, John T. Frederick, and John Frederick Nims of the Department of English, University of Notre Dame.

To receive critical attention at the Conference, manuscripts must be submitted by June 15. Write to the Director, The Writers' Conference, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Purdue's first English Language Workshop (to be known as English 200) will be held from Monday, June 18 through Saturday, July 7. Areas of study are: elementary linguistics, historical and comparative grammar, descriptive techniques, semantics, and trends in usage. For further information and for application blanks, write Dr. Russell Cosper, University Hall, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

A summer workshop in English will be held at Indiana State Teachers College, June 18 to July 20. For further information write Prof. George C. Smock, Department of English, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana.

The Purdue Department of English and the Purdue Memorial Union are completing a series of ten book reviews known as "Books and Coffee." Begun on February 20, the innovation was immediately successful, and average attendance has been about 125.

The University of Oklahoma Press has published a biography of Ambrose Bierce, by Paul Fatout (Purdue). The book was favorably reviewed in *Time*, April 2.

Purdue's annual literary dinner was held on Monday, May 21. Prizes were awarded to Purdue students, in the following fields: stories, poems, plays, essays, papers on human relations, on Indiana history, and on science. The dinner speaker was Warren Beck.

Fall CEA Meetings

Carrington C. Tutwiler, Jr., president of the Virginia-North Carolina CEA, announces that the annual meeting of his group will be held at the University of Richmond on November 17. Frederick Pottle will be the afternoon speaker.

Alan McGee, president of the NECEA, announces that the fall meeting of his group will be held at Emerson College, Boston.

The fall meeting of the California CEA is set, tentatively, for November 17, University of California at Los Angeles.

VOL I: NOW READY
VOL II: READY NEXT FALL

Spencer, Houghton, and Barrows:

BRITISH LITERATURE

Vol. I. BEOWULF TO SHERIDAN
Vol. II. BLAKE TO THE PRESENT DAY.

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

COLLEGE DEPARTMENT
285 Columbus Avenue
Boston 16, Mass.

CEA REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Penn CEA

The fourth annual meeting of the Pennsylvania group of the College English Association took place at Gettysburg College, April 28, with Bruce Dearing (Swarthmore), president of the group, as presiding officer.

The morning session began at 10:30 with greetings from Francis C. Mason (Gettysburg), who was in charge of arrangements for the meeting, and Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson, president of Gettysburg College. The topic of the morning session—a panel discussion—was "Exploring the Profession in Crisis." The moderator was George J. Becker (Swarthmore), who introduced the topic.

The first speaker in the panel was Lionel Conrath (Pittsburgh) now with the Aluminum Company of America. Mr. Conrath spoke forcefully on his belief that the teaching profession as it exists in American colleges today does not offer a young teacher a large enough salary to live on and that therefore many young men and women are seeking other work which they do not like as well.

The next speaker was Elisabeth Schneider (Temple), who spoke on three aspects of the general topic: (1) women teachers in crisis, (2) the policy of an English department if and when it is necessary to make dismissals, (3) possibilities of improving the status of the humanities in colleges today.

The third speaker was Allan Halline (Bucknell), who after offering a rebuttal to some of Mr. Conrath's strictures upon the profession, suggested the increasing necessity that graduate schools make their students aware of the world situation, especially by teaching semantics and thus helping to clarify issues when political parties make "contrary statements" about the same event.

George Warthen (Gettysburg) was chairman at the luncheon session at 12:30 p.m. Greetings to the group were extended by Thomas Marshall (Western Maryland), speaking for the central group of CEA and Robert T. Fitzhugh (Brooklyn), president of National CEA, who spoke of the growth of CEA. The luncheon speaker was Lt. Dearing, whose title was "The Tygers of Wrath and the Horses of Instruction." His contribution to the general theme of the meeting was a consideration of the political position of the college teacher.

William L. Werner (Penn State) was speaker at the afternoon session which began at 2:00 p.m. His topic was "Let's Stop Digging Up Henry James: an Essay on Literary Vogues and Popular Classics." Mr. Werner's thesis was that Henry James' works have little appeal for students today. He spoke of the two main revivals of interest in James: that reaching its peak in 1922-23 and declining to nothingness by 1928, the "heyday of the Lost Generation" and that beginning about 1933 and continuing to the present. Mr. Werner, emphasizing the average student's failure to enjoy James, said that the James formula was a "bit of conversation" from which he could spin a tale—a "web of imagined life," and added that James' style, though clear in his early works, became intricate and incoherent in his later works. Mr. Werner spoke of the fondness of the "New Critics" for James because of the many possible interpretations of his work but recommended that college teachers of English supplant him in the curriculum—Among possible substitutes with established popular appeal, Prof. Werner proposed—Gilbert and Sullivan, Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes), and General Lew Wallace (Ben-Hur). He recommended finally that since there is an interest in literature in college today, more teachers should take advantage of this and "come down into the market-place and give the people what they would read." "Nowadays when people look to the humanities for guidance, we should stress classics that are approximate and significant for our present problems."

Dean Armold (Pennsylvania Military College) chairman of the nominating committee, submitted the following slate of officers for next year:

President—William W. Watt (Lafayette)
Vice-president—George J. Becker (Swarthmore)
Secretary-Treasurer — Lois Montgomery (Wilson)

There being no other nominations, the secretary was instructed to cast a vote for this slate.

A. O. Lewis (Penn State) moved that the Pennsylvania group of CEA call for open hearings on the question of the Loyalty Oath Bill for teachers—the Pechan Bill ((Senate Bill 27) now before the Pennsylvania legislature. Mary Sturgeon (Beaver) seconded the motion, which was passed. It was suggested that a copy of this request be sent to State Senator Rowland B. Mahamy, chairman of the committee on the Pechan Bill.

Kenneth Longsdorf (Franklin and Marshall) extended an invitation to the Pennsylvania group of CEA to meet at Franklin and Marshall in 1952. He made a motion to this effect, which was seconded and passed. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

BELLE MATHESON
Beaver College

Comment

"An excellent program. . .Lionel Conrath produced a humdinging indictment of the training of English teachers, the spirit of English teaching, etc. . .Bruce Dearing's talk was witty and eloquent, and much to points I enjoy seeing made. . .Bill Werner's paper was heartwarming. . ." Robert Fitzhugh.

George Becker gave a brilliant introduction to the morning session. . .Lionel Conrath's attack on the profession was colorful if a little extreme. . .I am concerned lest we be too much on record as unilaterally and naively anti-PhD and anti-research. . .In an excellent presentation, Elisabeth Schneider spoke charmingly and most thoughtfully. . .Allan Halline had much of value to contribute. . The President of Gettysburg was most gracious and hospitable. . ." —Bruce Dearing.

T. V. Smith Texas Talk

Continued from page 1, col. 4

At the beginning of his address Dr. Smith avowed that he began as a teacher of English, and so would end.

After this introduction, the speaker, "gathering fragments of his dissevered self," sustained an autobiographic and reminiscent thread as he developed the idea of unity in the three disciplines of poetry, philosophy, and politics, to which he added a fourth, the discipline of science. In all there is a vision that gives centrality. Each originates in curiosity. "We know more than we understand."

Though all four disciplines originate in curiosity and the sense of wonder, the speaker distinguished them as to purpose: science, for the understanding and the manipulation of things; philosophy for the understanding and the manipulation of the mind; politics for the understanding and manipulation of people; and poetry for the understanding and manipulation of symbols. All these disciplines, re-iterated the speaker, are at bottom the same.

From this section of his talk to the end, Dr. Smith was the poet. The hub, the centrality of the disciplines, became the vision as he traced curiosity from the experience of his small daughter who extracted wonder from the cracks of second-rate apartment floors; the day when as a small child she came home from school to declare, "I hate poetry"; to the day four years later when, as a proud father, he overheard her quote an Emily Dickinson poem to her dog; and finally the year of her high school graduation when she had won an Honorable Mention in an *Atlantic* contest. But the climax was yet to come. This high school graduate wrote a poem with a repeated line that impressed the father, "Men must live". . ."Men must live." Dr. Smith suggested to her that they would call her poem "Youth" and he would write as a companion poem a reply called "Age." His poem had the echoing line, "Men too must die." Humorously, Dr. Smith said that she rejected his poem, saying, "I'll have nothing to do with your collaboration. Mine is a poem; yours a parody, and it's pessimistic besides."

"The crowning glory of pedagogy," said Dr. Smith, "is the ability to educate without creating resistance."

"Creativity makes us brothers under the skin," said the speaker. The poet's discipline is "the best of all," he believes, because it is the mastery of symbols, the end of poetry being the expression of truth in a medium of beauty. His was the indirect method, for "teaching must emerge"—and these are Dr. Smith's words—"as a discovery."—MARGARET L. WILEY

Practice In Writing

by

Clark Emery and William Wight

A combined text-workbook. The text is explicit, the illustrations are numerous, the exercises are to the point.

Just Published

302 pp. $2.75

WILLIAM SLOANE ASSOCIATES
119 W. 57th St.
New York 19

Understanding Poetry

Revised Edition
Cleanth Brooks
Robert Penn Warren

The revision of this popular anthology is available in two editions. The Shorter Edition (Sections I-VI) largely corresponds to the original, but includes new analyses, questions, exercises, and a wider selection from modern poets. The Complete Edition contains in addition, a general anthology of poems without analyses and new sections on poetic language, methods of composition, and an appreciation of the work of Wordsworth, Eliot, and Marvell.

COMPLETE EDITION, *1950, 727 pages*, cloth-bound $3.50, paper-bound $2.90.
SHORTER EDITION *1950, 518 pages*, cloth-bound, $2.80, paper-bound $2.30.

Manual for Teachers.

HENRY HOLT & COMPANY
257 Fourth Ave., New York 10

THE DROOD MURDER CASE

• by RICHARD M. BAKER

An ingenious and delightful work of literary detection. Baker shows, by actual clues in Dickens' story, the completion of the plot line and the solution of the mystery.

• "The best study of 'Edwin Drood' I have ever read."
John Dickson Carr
New York Herald-Tribune

• "This is an uncommonly interesting book, well-reasoned, well-based, earnest and—as it should be—highly provocative."
May Lamberton Becker
New York Times

208 pages $3.00

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley 4, California

Profession in Crisis

Continued from page 1

within the department is generally consulted or asked to make recommendations. This is where we come in. English departments can and do, in varying degrees, have something to say about how dismissals shall be determined within their own ranks.

Many of us must have pondered the very crucial question: On what basis should such dismissals —supposing them necessary—be made? Procedures vary greatly, but four factors are most often taken into acount. They are seniority, rank, professional competence, and need. In some departments one of them alone may be the determining factor. More often a decision is reached on the basis of some compromise among all or several. Some departments, I understand, consider only the first of these, seniority, or a combination of seniority and rank. If three persons must be dropped, by this system the three newest members will automatically go, though if one of these is an assistant professor he may be spared at the expense of another instructor. Need is often a consideration too, though usually little effort is made to establish who are actually the more and the less needy except as this is implied in the distictions between the single, the married, and those with children.

Some institutions, however, and some departments try as far as possible to make their decisions on the basis of competence. This is the hardest way, but it seems to me much the soundest. The other three criteria are easier to use because they are not subject to argument, they are less embarrassing, they seem more impersonal. It is not as hard to tell Mr. A., who is unmarried, that he will have to go rather than Mr. B, who has a wife and children—it is not as hard to do this as it is to tell A. that he is of less use to the department than B. It is also much easier to drop A. on the simple mechanical basis of his having joined the department a year later than B. I believe, however, that departments and institutions that have made their decisions entirely on these easier grounds have weakened themselves greatly.

The first responsibility of an English department is to provide good teaching and a stimulating intellectual climate, and whatever other like objectives we choose to set up. It should not drift into regarding itself as primarily a haven for whoever got there first. We hear a good deal about seniority in industrial jobs, but I think we should find that even there seniority is a prime consideration only in the more mechanical kinds of work. In executive and other responsible positions, ability is usually what counts. I do not mean to suggest that we should ape industry, but only that the quality of work may perhaps be as important in our profession as in that of soap making. There is in many quarters a good deal of fear of "subjective" judgement, and it is thought better to avoid that in deciding upon dismissals. Wouldn't it, though, be just as sensible to dispense with "subjective" judgment when we hire a new instructor? We could set up the standard of what we require—say, a Ph.D. and three published articles of so many pages each—and then, in the name of objectivity take the first applicant who offered himself.

I have heard it seriously urged that a department has no right to use "judgment," which may be fallible, in deciding whether or not a man should be let go. No one questions the propriety of using subjective "judgement" or "opinion" in hiring a man. Yet after he has been with us for a time, when our judgement is founded on far greater knowledge than before, we must put our judgement in our pocket and use instead a criterian that may be "objective" (like seniority) but that is actually irrevelant to his value within the department.

But I must get on to the third question I wish to raise. Our general topic is the Profession in Crisis. The College English Association has, I understand, grown tremendously in recent years and has become more and more active and successful in its publications, regional organizations, meetings, etc. As a profession, however, we are still weak in influence—as are other professions concerned with the humanities when compared with the sciences and the social sciences, not to mention the non-teaching professions like law and medicine. In the present crisis we are not growing any stronger either.

I have wondered whether we might not find it valuable to have a sort of super-organization that would take in our entire profession. Such an organization would have an influence and a standing in relation to other professions that no less inclusive one could have. If it were practical, I should suggest that the CEA should swallow the other English groups. But the others might not choose to be swallowed though they might choose to cooperate.

It seems to me that all members of our profession have enough in common to warrant some over-all organization. In recent years, the reaction of many English teachers against the old dominance of pedantic scholarship has been most salutary, but I think that the English profession as a whole would be weakened, at a time when we cannot afford to be weaker than we are, if these differences of emphasis produced an active split into hostile camps.

For this and other reasons I have wondered whether the top officers of the CEA, of the College section of the NCTE, the College Conference on Composition, and some kind of committee from the English people active in the MLA might be able to form a sort of super-English Association or whatever it might be. Perhaps this sounds like just one more organization to join that would duplicate what others do. But it need not be that. I do not visualize anything that would rule the profession with an iron hand quite as the American Medical Association does.

But the efforts of many of us to strengthen our own departments, to improve our teaching, to reduce the sizes of classes and teaching loads, these and many other things might be very practically assisted if there were some organization—a Council—or even a Committee—that could speak for the whole profession, could formulate perhaps certain standards that English departments should meet and perhaps publish an approved list of those that meet such standards. Just possibly it might even be able to thrash out the problems of graduate schools and the training of college teachers.

ELISABETH SCHNEIDER
Temple University

FOR DEAR OLD VIDEO U.

O, once, I've been told, if a prof was so bold
As to wander in late for a class,
He'd arrive at the spot, as likely as not,
To find they'd departed *en masse.*

He could wander about, he could grumble and pout,
And thunder and threaten, "I'll quiz you all!"
(An often-used phrase in those primitive days
Before we went audio-visual).

But now we've been freed from the pedagogue breed,
And we all enjoy our communion
With the things of the mind, since our prexy has signed
With the local Projectionists' Union.

No longer we flee from the poor Ph.D.
Who explains what was said and who said it;
We've traded our dean for a thirty-inch screen,
And we watch television for credit.

While the lore of the ages, on history's pages,
Was dry, enervating, and hoary,
Now we're getting the feel of it all from one reel
Of that thriller, "The Charlemagne Story."

As for literature, we have taken the cure
And thrown all our books out the window;
But, boy, is it groovy when seen in a movie
Starring Betty or Lana or Linda!

Why, even the Greeks weren't all of them freaks;
Have you seen Gary Cooper as Hector?
He was whizzing along—until something went wrong
With the Classics Department projector.

But if, just because of mechanical flaws,
You fear for our mental digestion,
You've failed to keep pace with the cultural race;
Yet it leaves one embarrassing question:

Though our prexy says study's for old fuddy-duddies,
And the student who labors and crams
Is committing a blunder—I can't help but wonder:
What about final exams?

Brooklyn College
L. B. SALOMON

CURRENT ENGLISH COMPOSITION

Robert J. Geist
Michigan State
Richard A. Summers
Univ. of Arizona
Just published
584 pp., $2.50

A new freshman composition text providing notably lucid discussions of usage, "correctness," and jargon. Throughout, the authors explain *why* to the student rather than merely *what* by means of introductions, notes, and sentence analyses. Combining simplicity and the usage approach, this text emphasizes clarity through a series of analytical steps based on classroom experience.

write for complimentary examination copy if you teach the above course.

Rinehart & Company, Inc.
232 MADISON AVENUE · NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

Types and Technics in English Composition
by
Frederick A. Manchester

This new English text combines the essential principles of writing with an illustrative anthology. The four standard types of composition — exposition, argument, description, and narration—are discussed regarding both form and subject matter. The selections are short and each is followed by a brief analysis of structure and style with suggestions for a similar Composition. *About 352 pp.*

Appleton-Century-Crofts
35 West 32nd Street
New York 1, N. Y.